

## Desktop Explained....

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"The Windows Desktop is a metaphor for your real-world desk, although it's more like an office-top than a desktop."

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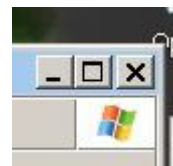
The monitor display is what we call the desktop, and you will learn in later classes how to use it more efficiently and how to customize it to better fit your needs and personality.



The easiest way to start an application on your computer is to use the graphical icon on the "desktop". The desktop is the area that appears on the screen when you do not have any applications open. These graphical icons are often referred to as "shortcuts" because they provide a shortcut to start an application.


### OPENING AND CLOSING AN APPLICATION

To start an application, place the mouse pointer over an icon on the desktop and double click the left mouse button. This will open up a new window on your screen. Close this new window by clicking on the  in the upper-right-hand corner of that window.

Another way to close an application is to click on the word **File** [drop down menu] at the top left of the screen and then click on **Exit** from the list that drops down. This method closes an application completely.



In the upper-right-hand corner of every open window are three buttons [pictured]. The  we've discussed, closes. The box  is maximize and when you click it resizes the window you are working in to fill more or less of the screen. Practice now by clicking the box in the upper-right-hand corner. Click it again to

return the page to its former size. The underscore  is minimize and when you click it the page appears to close, but is still available in the taskbar at the bottom of the screen - click the title in the taskbar [see below] to get the page back.

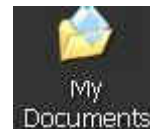
## OTHER DESKTOP FEATURES...

**Icons.** The small pictures you see are called icons and each represents a function on your computer.

**Recycle Bin.** This is the "trash can" or "file 13" in your office. Dragging and dropping documents or files that you no longer need is very easy. Here is an important tip...when you move items from your computer into the recycle bin and dialog window opens and asks if you are sure, you must click to OK this function...when you "empty the bin" you have another opportunity to say yes, that you are sure you want the item(s) gone. **But**, if you move items into the recycle bin from any media other than your computer (disks, USB drives, etc.) you only get one chance to OK the decision. You will learn more about this in later classes.



**My Documents.** The icon that looks like a folder bulging with documents provides central storage for all the documents you create or store on your computer. Think of it as a huge filing cabinet, which you can fill with documents neatly sorted into their own folders for easy retrieval.



**My Computer.** My Computer stores information about your computer system. It contains icons that give you access to your disk drives. It also provides access to the Control Panel (also accessible via the Start Menu), where you can adjust settings for your system.



## TASKBAR FEATURES...

The Taskbar, at the bottom of the monitor screen, contains the Start Button and Quick Launch. You might have several programs open on your desktop. The short name for "anything that's currently open on your desktop" is *task*. The Taskbar lets you locate open programs you have running and switch back and forth as necessary.

When you have lots of windows open, they pile up on your Windows desktop, just like sheets of paper can pile up on your real desktop. You can use the taskbar to sort of "shuffle things around", so you're in control of what is, and isn't visible at the moment.

**The Start Button.** The term *button* is used frequently in Windows, when in everyday use it conjures up something quite



different (usually something round and sewn to a shirt). The Start button in Windows looks like this picture. The Start Menu provides access to your programs, settings, help and search. More on this in a later class. To select an item, click the Start button, move the mouse pointer up the list of options until you highlight the one you want, then click once more.

**Quick Launch Bar** provides a quick way to start programs you use frequently, such as your Web browser and email program. The operating system usually displays the built-clock on the right side.



## SHUTTING DOWN

It's important you turn your computer off correctly. Here's the proper way to exit from Windows:

1. Close any open programs or documents.
2. Click the Start button and select Shut Down or Turn Off Computer.
3. A screen will appear indicating the Windows options available. Select the appropriate option in your operating system to shut down/turn off computer.
4. Unplug the power strip or computer from the power outlet and disconnect the modem cord from the telephone outlet. It's important you do this, as your computer can be damaged by lightning strikes even while it is not switched on.

**Credit:** Looking for a site that helps you learn in plain English? Visit [GeekGirls.com](http://GeekGirls.com)